

LETTER OF TESTIMONY – Nancy T. Browne, MS, PPCNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

IN SUPPORT OF LD 295

An Act To Repeal Restrictions That Prohibit Certain Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
from Providing Essential Health Care Services

Before the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee

Public Hearing: February 18, 2020

Good morning, Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Distinguished Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Nancy Browne. I am a practicing pediatric nurse practitioner and resident of Falmouth, Maine.

On behalf of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, in my elected role as the AANP Maine State Representative, I am speaking in support of L.D. 295: An Act To Repeal Restrictions That Prohibit Certain Advanced Practice Registered Nurses from Providing Essential Health Care Services

I am a lifelong resident of Maine, raised in Winterport, and have practiced in both Bangor and Portland for 28 years as a nurse practitioner (NP). Over the course of my career, I have seen Maine NPs become the backbone of care for many underserved Maine communities.

As members of this Committee, you understand that our state faces unique challenges arising from our aging population, regional differences in access, and high rates of chronic disease.

Finding and retaining supervising providers, especially in underserved areas of Maine, can be a significant challenge. Without securing these regulated agreements, Maine nurse practitioners are unable to practice our profession and care for patients in these communities.

This can mean that NPs who desire to practice in rural and underserved areas who are unable to meet this regulatory requirement, forgo establishing practices in these areas and some leave our state. Maine NPs who are motivated to practice in outlying areas share that this model makes it more difficult and less attractive to return to a rural area once they have completed this regulatory period as they and their families become embedded in communities where they did complete this requirement.

Maine state law has recognized NPs to evaluate, diagnose, treat, prescribe, and manage patients under the oversight of the Board of Nursing—for nearly two decades. There is no evidence during this time that these mandated contracts are necessary. This outdated law is the result of a prior political compromise and is creating challenges to moving our state forward towards increased access to care.

In summary,

- LD295 would simply make permanent the COVID-19 Executive Action that has been in place in Maine since March 2020. For almost a year, the state of Maine has recognized that suspending this 24-month waiting period would safely increase the availability of qualified providers.

- Eliminating this unnecessary barrier will make Maine more competitive in recruiting nurse practitioners to meet our state's needs. Several states including our neighbor, New Hampshire, have never required NP licensees to have this type of state-mandated, legal agreement as a precondition of providing patient care.
- Finally, this legislation would not change scope of practice and NPs would still be required to complete nationally accredited NP graduate programs that include advanced didactic and clinical education followed by passing and maintaining national certification.

On behalf of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and our Maine membership, I urge you to vote in support of LD 295 and appreciate the opportunity to share my testimony with you today.

Please feel free to contact me or the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association with any questions or for further information.

Respectfully submitted,

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